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G. R. Lamade, Edited Small Towns' 'Grit'

Special to the Herald Tribune

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. George R. Lamade, 71, publisher and son of the man who made Grit a weekly newspaper that is read with almost religious fervor in small-town America, shot and killed himself Wednesday night.

Mr. Lamade had been in ill health for some time, according to Lycoming county coroner Earl R. Miller. He died of a gunshot wound at his home.

Mr. Lamade was a plain-looking, plain-spoken, conservative man who preferred to keep Grit a plain-looking, plain-spoken, conservative newspaper. In 1962 he changed only one aspect of the paper—its appearance. Grit bought new off-set presses and it is now a fancy, color-splashed weekly that looks a lot breezier than it reads. Its circulation is more than one million.

Mr. Lamade liked a homey Grit, and once proclaimed:

"Ever since its founding, Grit has sought to help win for Small Town America the recognition it richly deserves as a vital factor in the American way of life. Small Town America is a land all its own. . . . It is a land where God comes first, others second, and self comes last—where personal ambition, liberty and freedom still come before charity and government hand-outs."

Mr. Lamade, who became publisher when his father died in 1938, ran Grit ("America's Greatest Family Newspaper") as a paper he said "rings the joy bells of life."

"Be handsome if you can, witty if you must, but be agreeable if it kills you," Mr. Lamade told his staff, and so Grit has always been run along those lines. It runs stories of uplift ("Peaunts Give Man New Lease on Life"), dress patterns, serials, a checkers column, and articles on child care.

Grit was acquired in 1884, two years after its founding, by Mr. Lamade's father, Die-

who constantly over the years exhorted his staff to "avoid showing the wrong side of things, or making people feel disconcerted."

Under George Lamade's leadership, the paper built up a string of nearly 200 part-time correspondents. More than 40,000 boys in small towns now distribute it, and among Grit news boys have been Carl Sandburg, Sen. Karl Mundt, Gen. Alfred Gruenther, Gene Autry, and baseball commissioner Ford Frick.

Mr. Lamade was born in Williamsport. He served in World War I, after attending the University of Missouri journalism school and Columbia University. In 1919, he joined his father and brother in the management of Grit.

Mr. Lamade was a former member of the Pennsylvania Highway Planning Commission for Constitutional Revision, and Gov. William Scranton's Council of Business and Industry. He was a board member of several local businesses.

Mr. Lamade took his own life at a time when the Little League World Series was in progress at a ball field that was provided through his help. In 1958, Grit gave Little League, Inc., a 20-acre plot of land as a memorial to his brother, Howard.

Mr. Lamade is survived by his wife and five children. Funeral services will be held at 10 a. m. Saturday at St. Mark's Lutheran Church.